

# Focused Neighborhood Assistance Program Upcounty Focus Area



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# **Upcounty Focus Area**

## **Executive Summary**

Providing healthy and sustainable communities with safe streets and secure neighborhoods is an important part of the mission for Montgomery County Government. In support of this mission, the Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) is undertaking a pilot initiative to comprehensively address community needs as identified by data driven analysis, residents and stakeholders in two geographically defined Focus Areas. The two Focus Areas are:

- Mid-County (Georgia Avenue south to Randolph Road; east to Veirs Mill Road; north to Turkey Branch Creek; east to Georgia Avenue)
- Upcounty (Interstate 270 south to Great Seneca Creek; south west to Clopper Road; north west to Germantown Road; north east to Middlebrook Road to Interstate 270)

In 1950 the Upcounty Focus Area consisted primarily of farms and forested land. There were fewer than 50 homes - a handful of farmsteads scattered throughout the area and a few dozen single-family homes. These single-family homes were located mostly in the western part of the Focus Area, along Liberty Mill Road and in the area we now refer to as the Historic District. By 2008 roughly 7,800 homes were in the Focus Area. In contrast to the homes in 1950, the majority of the homes currently located in the Focus Area are attached town homes which share ownership and maintenance responsibilities for common areas.

This report on the Upcounty Focus Area provides baseline information about the community which can be updated over time to measure program success. It also contains recommendations that can be refined as specific implementation strategies and short and long term objectives.

We would like to express our appreciation to all those who contributed to this report.

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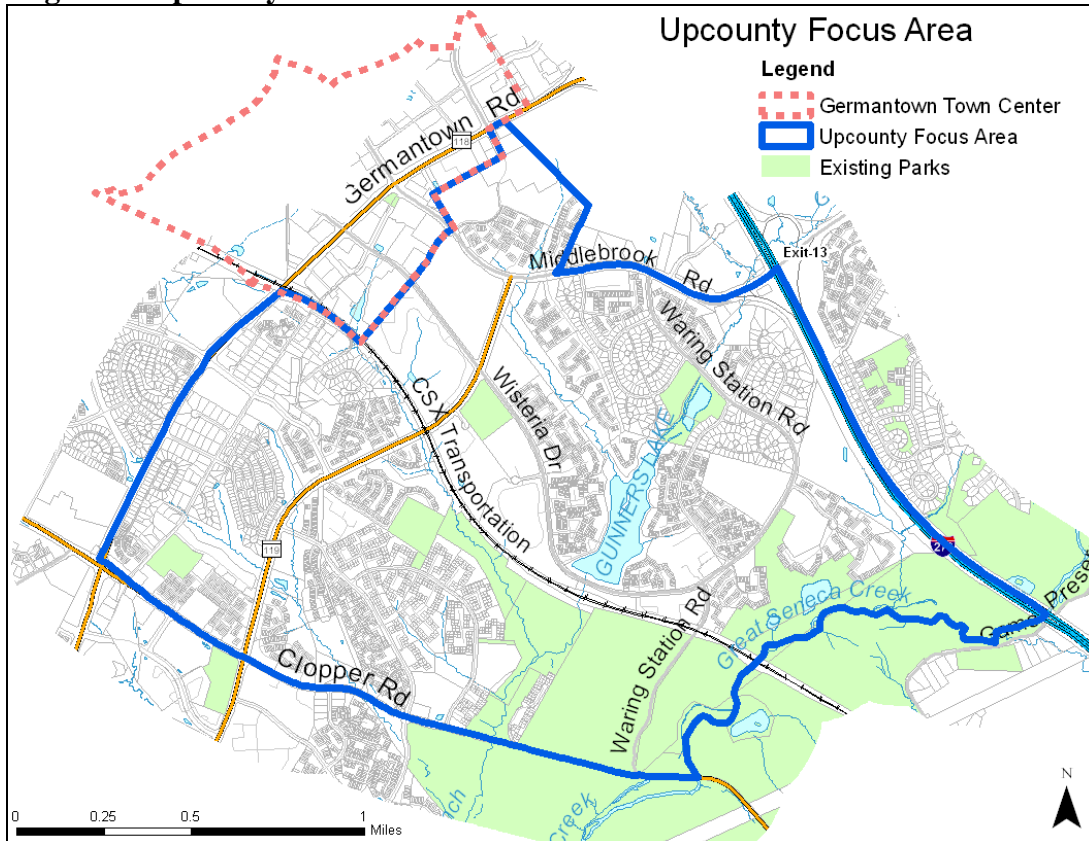
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## **Background**

The Upcounty Focus Area covers 2.6 square miles, or 1,656 acres. It is located to the west of I-270 and is bounded generally by Middlebrook and Germantown Roads to the north and west; and Clopper Road and Great Seneca Creek to the south.

**Figure 1: Upcounty Focus Area**



Planning and zoning that would guide the development of the Focus Area had taken shape by the 1960s and large scale residential development in the Focus Area began in earnest in 1973 with the Cinnamon Woods neighborhood. By 1990, roughly 80% of the Focus Area's housing stock had been built. Today, a majority of the area's 22,000-plus residents live in either single-family attached housing (58% of the housing stock) or low-rise apartments and condos (33% of the housing stock). And much of this housing stock is now beginning to show its age. Also, in contrast to developments prior to 1960, most of the housing units are part of a homeowners association.

Since 1964, homeowners associations have become increasingly common in the USA and very prominent in Montgomery County. There are 935 HOAs registered with the Montgomery County Commission on Common Ownership Communities.

**Table 1: January 2008 Housing Unit Estimates**

	Upcounty Focus Area		Countywide	
Unit Type	Units	Percent of Total	Units	Percent of Total
Single-Family Detached	732	9.4%	180,442	49.4%
Single-Family Attached	4,493	57.6%	66,996	18.3%
Multi-family	2,581	33.1%	118,092	32.3%
Total Units	7,806	100.0%	365,530	100.0%
Percent of countywide stock:		2.14%		
Source: Montgomery County Department of Planning (note that these figures vary slightly from those in Table 5.)				

“In Montgomery County, these associations are authorized to provide for self-government and mandatory membership through which open spaces, privately owned streets, parking, recreation and other facilities are owned, maintained and governed. In many cases the association’s authority extends onto each privately owned lot and residence with regard to its external use, appearance, maintenance and repair. These associations have the authority under Maryland and County laws to adopt and enforce rules and regulations for the architectural design and private use of common and private owned property in the association; assess annual dues for the maintenance of the common property and the operations of the association; and, hold its members individually accountable for violations of the rules and covenants of the community. Each property or lot and its resident, or condominium residential unit, is seen as an integral, valuable, and contributing part of the community. In return, the association maintains and protects the community standards and its intrinsic residential values.”<sup>1</sup>

Another primary driver in the proliferation of single-family homeowners associations was the U.S. Clean Water Act of 1977, which required all new real estate developments to detain storm water so that flow to adjoining properties was no greater than the pre-development runoff. This law required nearly all residential developments to construct detention or retention areas to hold excess storm water until it could be released at the pre-development flow level. Since these retention areas serve multiple residences they are almost always designated as a common area, which supports the need for a homeowners association.

<sup>1</sup> Montgomery County, Common Ownership Community Manual & Resource Guide, 2005, p. 1



## **Neighborhood Selection**

The Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) has chosen the Upcounty Focus Area as one of only two areas in which to pilot a new initiative in partnership with residents to strengthen and improve their neighborhoods, expecting that the effort can be modified and expanded to other areas as lessons are learned and resources allow.

The selection of this neighborhood was made as the result of a data-driven analysis focused on single-family homes in primarily, if not exclusively, residential neighborhoods and grew from a belief in the importance of strong, well-maintained neighborhoods as a critical component of overall community well-being.

In identifying areas for consideration, we first reviewed data on crime, income (as viewed through the numbers of school-age children eligible for Free and Reduced Meals) and single-family rentals (later refined to focus on foreclosure events) county-wide. These criteria are ones that have been commonly used by others to measure conditions at the neighborhood level, and this analysis identified areas that appeared to be experiencing challenges greater than those experienced by the county overall.

**Table 2: Upcounty Foreclosure Events**

Year & Quarter	Foreclosure Event Type			Total	Percent of County	Quarterly Increase
	Default	Auction	Real-estate Owned			
2008 Q1	35	46	6	87	5.3%	
2008 Q2	64	7	3	74	5.6%	-14.9%
2008 Q3	25	6	13	44	4.7%	-40.5%
2008 Q4	48	25	16	89	5.6%	102.3%
2009 Q1	53	44	16	113	5.8%	27.0%
Total	225	128	54	407	5.5%	
Sources: RealtyTrac & the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development; Montgomery County Department of Planning						

With regard to foreclosures, overall the county experienced 1,945 foreclosure events for the 1st quarter of 2009; and 7,421 for the past five quarters. This represents a foreclosure rate of 2.0% of all housing units in the County experiencing at least one foreclosure event. The Upcounty Focus Area experienced 113 foreclosure events for the 1st quarter of 2009 and 407 for the past five quarters, which gives it a foreclosure rate of 5.2% for this period. This means that the rate of foreclosure events in this area is 2.6 times higher than the County as a whole.

**Table 3: Countywide Foreclosure Events**

Year & Quarter	Foreclosure Event Type				Quarterly Increase
	Default	Auction	Real-estate Owned	Total	
2008 Q1	918	613	117	1,648	
2008 Q2	78	1,163	76	1,317	-20.1%
2008 Q3	111	504	315	930	-29.4%
2008 Q4	368	883	330	1,581	70.0%
2009 Q1	1,117	593	235	1,945	23.0%
Total	2,592	3,756	1,073	7,421	
Sources: RealtyTrac & the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development; Montgomery County Department of Planning					

Staff further refined neighborhood selection among the areas identified by commonalities that would facilitate community connections, for example, school boundaries. Staff then identified natural separators, which includes natural features such as waterways and/or major roadways. Finally, staff considered areas that appeared to already meet eligibility criteria for certain types of federal or state funding. For example, federal funds to assist in mitigating the negative impact of foreclosures.

After touring different areas, this community emerged as a strong candidate for this new initiative. Further data gathering specific to the area, through meetings with residents, County representatives and others has confirmed that a partnership is welcome and that this area can benefit from focused neighborhood assistance.

## **Neighborhood Details**

### *Demographics*

The Upcounty Focus Area is more diverse than the population of the County as a whole, and has residents who are younger, less affluent, and with less formal education. This is according to the Planning Department's 2005 Census Update Survey (see Appendix 2 for details). The average age in the Focus Area in 2005 was just 31.4 compared to the County average of 36.9. While the number of school aged children is about the same, the Focus Area had nearly 50% more children under 5 years old and less than half the number of people age 65 years and above as compared to the County as a whole.

There were 30.4% of residents 25 years and older in 2005 in the Focus Area that had a high school diploma and just 50.8% had a bachelor's degree or better. This compares with 22.3% and 63.6% respectively for the County. Age and educational attainment are likely related to incomes, which were lower in the Focus Area than for the County as a whole. The median household income in the Focus Area in 2004, \$63,400, was more than \$20,000 less than the County median of \$83,880. While the percentage of households earning between \$70,000 and \$150,000 was roughly the same within the Focus Area and for the County at large, the Focus Area had only 3.8% of households earning more \$150,000 while the countywide figure was 19.5%. At the lower earnings level the opposite was true – 56.8% of Focus Area households earned less than \$70,000 while only 40% of households countywide had incomes in this range.

Younger, less affluent Montgomery County residents may be choosing to live in the Focus Area partly because of its lower costs. Average monthly costs for both homeowners and renters was nearly 20% less in 2005 than costs countywide. The location, farther from fixed transit lines and job centers, also seems to affect commuting patterns, with residents of the Focus Area driving more and walking, biking, and taking transit less. It is interesting to note that while Focus Area residents drive more, 73% of that difference is accounted for by the higher percentage of Focus Area residents who carpool to work.

The Upcounty Focus Area is more diverse than the County as a whole. Just 51.4% of residents identified themselves as White (including Hispanics) in 2005 compared to 64.0% countywide. There were 8.2% more Blacks in the Focus Area than in the County as a whole, followed by Other at a 3.4% margin and Asian or Pacific Islander counted at just a 1.1% increase over the countywide figure. Residents of Hispanic origin, who can be of any race, comprised 26.8% of the Focus Area population while for the County as a whole the figure is 13.9%.

**Table 4: Racial Breakdown of Public Schools**

School	Racial / Ethnic Composition (percent)					Students Enrolled
	American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	
Clopper Mill Elementary School	0.0	9.2	39.9	39.2	11.8	424
Germantown Elementary School	0.4	21.8	30.5	17.9	29.5	285
Roberto Clemente Middle School	0.2	20.3	27.9	23.2	28.4	1,153
S. Christa McAuliffe Elementary School	0.4	10.9	36.8	27.9	24	570
Seneca Valley High School	0.4	10.8	34	22.5	32.4	1,344

Source: Montgomeryschoolsmd.org, 2007-2008 school year

## *Land Use and Zoning*

The Focus Area is largely residential in nature, with limited industrial and commercial uses and little space remaining for new development. It is located within the larger Germantown Planning Area, which has a ratio of employment to housing nearly three times the County average. There are large employers such as the Department of Energy, the National Institutes of Standards and Technology and numerous life sciences and technology companies in proximity to the Focus Area along the I-270 Corridor.

The Germantown Town Center, located just outside of the Focus Area's northern boundary, provides residents with convenient access to a host of services including retail shopping, cinema and live entertainment, hotels and restaurants, a new public library, a new fire station, Police District 5 headquarters, the Recreation Department's Germantown Community Center, and the County's Upcounty Regional Services Center.

Located within the Focus Area are: **Germantown Square Shopping Center** and the **Grand Mart Center**. The Grand Mart Center provides a grocery store, gas station and small retail services while the Germantown Square Shopping Center provides a drug store, small and mid-sized restaurants and retail services. The Grand Mart Center, also referred to as the Germantown LLC property, is adjacent to the Cinnamon Woods community. The owners have applied for rezoning and would like to raze the shopping center and build 112 new town homes. Fourteen (i.e., 12.5 %) would be affordable housing, moderately priced dwelling units (MPDUs). Community response has been mixed, with strong opposition based upon traffic concerns, loss of the grocery store, overcrowding at the Clopper Mill Elementary School and concern about disturbance to the nearby historic cemetery. Others in the community favor the development because they feel that the 25 year old shopping center, which is in decline, detracts from home market values and from community appeal, and that the new town homes would have a positive impact. A final decision to approve or disapprove the rezoning has not been determined.

## *Housing*

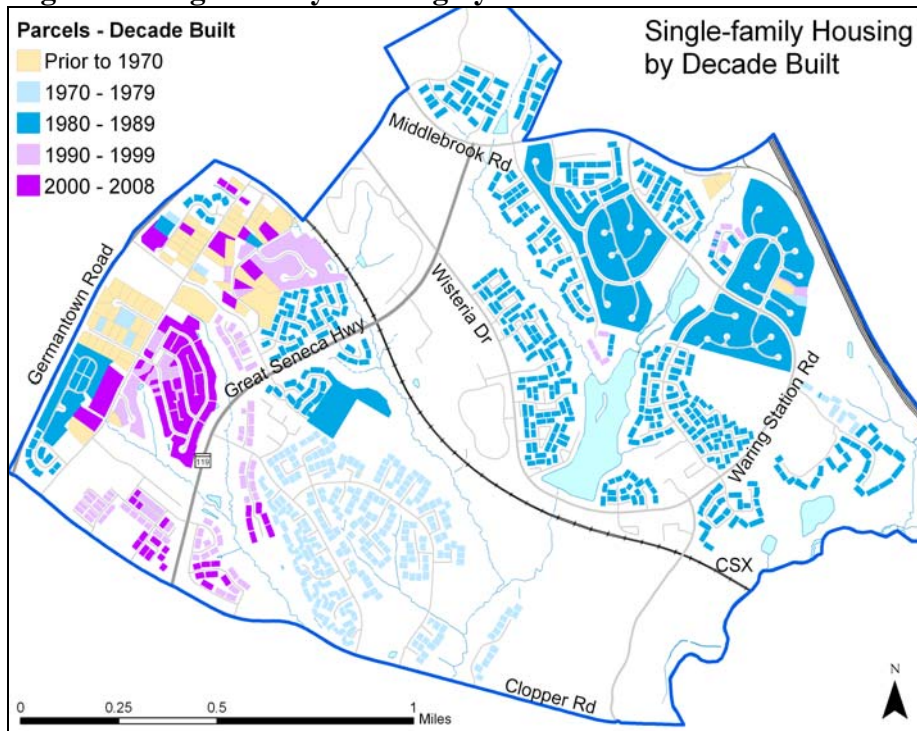
There are 2,581 multi-family units, 5,072 single-family attached and detached housing units within the Focus Area. As mentioned previously, a vast majority of these homes (4,493) are attached town homes, versus detached single-family homes (732). The term single-family refers to both types.

Based on the visual analysis and information obtained from the Montgomery County Commission on Common Ownership Communities (CCOC), a majority of the single-family homes within the Focus Area are located within neighborhoods where common areas are managed by homeowners associations (HOAs).

**Table 5: Age and Type of Single-family Housing**

Decade Built	Housing Type		Total
	Detached	Attached	
1970s	5	1,032	1,037
1980s	412	2,711	3,123
1990s	94	443	537
2000s	156	156	312
pre-1971	62	1	63
Total	729	4,343	5,072
Housing Type as a Percent of Total	14%	86%	
Source: Parcel file maintained the Montgomery County Planning Department (note that these figures vary slightly from those in Table 1.)			

The Upcounty team identified 27 named communities within the Focus Area, and 21 homeowners associations based on analysis of CCOC data and available public records.

**Figure 2: Single-family Housing by Decade Built**

In general, the HOAs in the Focus Area have done a good job of maintaining the common areas and providing stability through the years. However, as the housing stock and the physical aspects of the neighborhood infrastructure have begun to age, maintenance issues have given way to improvement issues. HOAs within the Focus Area are retooling and many have embarked upon improvement programs. However, the weakened national economy, has led to financial challenges on the part of homeowners which has led to more delinquencies in HOA assessments. Some HOAs report that as available funds are shrinking, they are forced to reduce their level of service and plans for community maintenance and improvements.

In addition to the neighborhood HOAs operating within the Focus Area, an umbrella management organization, The North Lake Village Federation, also plays a key role. The Federation owns and maintains Gunner's Lake, the bike trail surrounding the lake, two swimming pools, and tennis courts. The HOAs surrounding the lake are members of the Federation. They share in the costs of maintaining the lake, trails, and other facilities. Residents of these affiliated HOAs are eligible to purchase membership rights to utilize the swimming pools and other Federation facilities.

### *Transportation*

#### Transit Station

The Germantown Transit Center opened in 2002 to provide improved bus service for both the residential and business communities. It includes a 175-space Park and Ride Lot with access to I-270. It is located just outside of the northern boundary of the Focus Area, between Crystal Rock Drive, Aircraft Drive, Maryland Route 118, and Century Boulevard.

The transit center includes six bus bays, brick sidewalks, lighting, and a taxi stand. It is located on 1.6 acres of privately owned land, and was constructed through a public/private partnership with the Bellmead Development Corporation, developer of Germantown Town Center East. The project was \$1.9 million, with \$1.6 million contributed by the County and \$300,000 funded through a Maryland Transit Administration Smart Growth Transit Program Grant.

#### MARC

The MARC (Maryland Area Regional Commuter) Train Service is a commuter rail system that operates three lines of service in Maryland. The Brunswick line serves the Germantown MARC Station. To the north it provides access to Frederick County and Martinsburg West Virginia. To the south it provides access to Gaithersburg, Rockville, Kensington, Silver Spring and terminates at Union Station.

The MARC Station building in Germantown is a replica of the original 1891 structure which was burned down by arson in 1978. It is within the northern boundary of the Focus Area at 19320 Mateny Hill Road.

### *Public Safety*

Upcounty Focus Area residents, the District 5 police, homeowners association board members and County government officials identified crimes such as robberies and vandalism as major problems in the area. Some neighborhoods have more problems with these issues than others.

It is thought that youth may be playing a part in some property crimes and the threat of growing gang activity is a prominent concern. Detailed data on the age of perpetrators is not available to confirm this observation. However, the Upcounty Regional Services Center has led a community-based collaboration with other agencies, schools, non-profits, and community businesses to develop strategies that promote positive youth development.

The Montgomery County Police Department, in accord with approximately 17,000 law enforcement agencies nationwide, voluntarily submit crime statistics through the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program to the state for compilation nationally by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Crimes are classified at UCR Part I or UCR part II. Part I crimes directly relate to two types of crimes; crimes against the person and crimes against property. Criminal homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, theft, motor vehicle theft and arson, are all categorized as Part I crimes. Part II crimes encompass all other reportable classifications not included in Part I such as fraud, embezzlement, vandalism, weapons, drunkenness, disorderly conduct, etc. Only arrest data is reported in this category.

Major crimes, or “Part 1” crimes, are mapped by the Police Department and are available for analysis within the Focus Area. The Planning Department’s 2005 Census Update Survey, indicates the household population for the Focus Area is approximately 22,060. This is 2.37% of the countywide population. Table 6 shows that 2.26% of countywide major crimes took place in the Focus Area during federal fiscal year 2008 - slightly less than might be expected. Table 6 shows that while major crimes have increased in the most recent year, the increase is only a fraction higher than that for the County as a whole. Of the seven classifications in this table, there were no murders in either year shown below, there were reductions in five types of crimes, and there was a significant increase in one category – larceny. The increase in larceny was due largely to an increase in theft from vehicles.

Minor crimes or “Part 2” crimes according to the Uniform Crime Report are not available for the Focus Area alone.

**Table 6: Major Crimes**

Classification	Federal Fiscal Year 2007 Oct 1, 2006 - Sept 30, 2007		Federal Fiscal Year 2008 Oct 1, 2007 - Sept 30, 2008	
	Upcounty Focus Area	Countywide	Upcounty Focus Area	Countywide
Aggravated Assault	11	584	13	542
Burglary	72	3,562	66	3,646
Homicide	0	12	0	19
Larceny	131	6,780	201	8,695
Rape	8	142	3	134
Robbery	42	1,067	36	1,118
Vehicle Theft	64	2,472	54	2,384
Grand Total	328	14,619	373	16,538
Percent Increase			13.72%	13.13%
Percent of Countywide	2.24%		2.26%	
Source: Montgomery County Police Department				

## **Information Gathering/Community Outreach**

A visual assessment of the Upcounty Focus Area was undertaken neighborhood by neighborhood during March 2009. Also, during the first quarter of 2009, the DHCA Upcounty team met with County agencies and organizations to gather input on community assets, issues and needs. These meetings were followed by meetings with community leaders, presentations at HOA meetings, and discussions with community management representatives. DHCA solicited input and consulted with:

- Board members, and/or management representatives from the following HOAs provided input: Cinnamon Woods HOA, Germantown Estates HOA, Meadows at North Lake HOA, North Lake Village Federation, NorthCreek Condominiums, North Lake Woods HOA, Olde Seneca Woods HOA, Stoneridge HOA, Waring Station HOA, Woodlake HOA
- Community Residents\*
- Department of Housing and Community Affairs - Code Enforcement Section
- Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
- Montgomery County Police Department, District 5, including ride-along
- Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission
- Montgomery County Public Schools principals
- Upcounty Regional Services Center (staff)
- Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board (community stakeholders)

\*A community charrette, which was open to the public, was held at the Upcounty Regional Services Center on March 29, 2009.



Community residents working with DHCA staff during the charrette.



## **Community Assets**

### *Location*

Residents report that one of the area's greatest assets is its location. Interstate 270 provides good access to Interstate 495, metropolitan Washington, western Maryland, and Virginia. Here, they report that due to surrounding parkland, the "feel" is like the country, but the ready access to work centers, shopping and great schools, reminds them that they live within a robust metropolitan area.

### *Gunner's Lake*

Gunner's Lake is named often among residents as a highly valued asset to the community. Residents enjoy relaxing by the lake, walking or riding bikes along the trails, and in general they feel that the lake is one of the more important positive assets of the community.

The lake was actually built as a storm water management facility, and is jointly maintained by the North Lake Village Federation and Montgomery County. The Federation is responsible for the aesthetic features of the lake and surrounding area, and the County is responsible for the structural features.



A view of Gunner's Lake and surrounding pathway.

### *Parks and Recreation*

The Upcounty Focus Area's conversion from farms and forests into planned residential neighborhoods has been accompanied by the steady creation of parks and other public recreation facilities. Just a mile or so to the west of the Focus Area, residents can find a wide assortment of state-of-the-art recreation facilities in the 695-acre South Germantown Recreational Park. The facilities include the Maryland SoccerPlex & Discovery Sports Center and the 60,000 square-foot Germantown Indoor Swim Center. Both attract visitors from a wide area.

More than 150 acres of Seneca Creek State Park fall within the borders of the Focus Area. Seneca Creek State Park provides lots of space for passive and active enjoyment of nature. There are numerous neighborhood connections to the park and to the Seneca Creek Greenway Trail, which is a largely completed 25-mile greenway connecting the Potomac and Patuxent Rivers.

There are four local parks in the Focus Area, owned and maintained by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, totaling nearly 100 acres. They offer tennis, basketball, softball, multi-use fields, playgrounds, and picnic areas. A majority of residents also enjoy access to recreational opportunities at the many private, homeowners association-owned and maintained playgrounds and at one or more of the private swim clubs in the Focus Area.



Example of one the many HOA-owned and maintained play grounds

### *Schools*

Within the Focus Area are three elementary schools: S. Christa McAuliffe, Clopper Mill and Germantown; one middle school, Roberto Clemente; and one high school, Seneca Valley. Children residing within the Focus Area also attend a number of other nearby public schools which are outside of the Focus Area. These schools include Kingsview and King Middle Schools, Northwest High School, and four elementary schools whose enrollment boundaries extend just beyond the northern edges of the Focus Area.

Many of the residents who attended the community charrette commented that the quality schools, in addition to the affordability of the homes, were factors that influenced their choice to move into the area.

### *Housing*

The housing within the Focus Area is a mix of single-family, detached, attached (i.e., town homes), and multi-family. The vast majority of the homes are single-family attached homes of various exterior and interior designs and sizes. The average 2006 sales price of a home in Montgomery County was \$485,000. The average 2006 sales price of a home in Germantown was \$355,000. The Focus Area is considered one of the more affordable locations in Germantown.

## **Community Challenges and Recommendations**

### **1. Common Area Infrastructure/Lighting/Tree Trimming**

Existing sidewalks do not provide optimum pedestrian connectivity throughout many of the neighborhoods. Residents feel that streets have been patched but are well overdue for repaving. Pot holes, large cracks and other signs of disrepair have been noted by residents.

Insufficient lighting is an issue in several areas. The majority of the insufficient lighting is within certain HOA managed neighborhoods and along pathways. In some cases the lighting installation does not meet current residential lighting standards, particularly with regard to types of poles and fixtures. There are significant costs associated with improving this lighting. In addition, it was noted that more frequent maintenance would optimize the lighting levels in some of the areas. (See #4 below – Safety and Security - for more information.)

The presence of overgrown trees and foliage blocking lighting from street lights, and neighborhood signage was noted. There have been discussions among residents about the advantages and disadvantages of lighting pathways between homes and to park areas. Some residents favor lighting while others feel that lighting encourages use of the pathways after dark which is prohibited. Most pathways are currently unlit.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Plan and design a neighborhood “Pedestrian Linkages” program to evaluate issues of pathway lighting and to otherwise enhance pedestrian pathways.
- Conduct lighting study to determine current lighting levels within neighborhoods and recommend improvements.
- Ensure trees and other foliage receive appropriate, on-going trimming.

### **2. Need for Youth Activities**

Residents, school officials and District 5 police expressed concern about the lack of positive activities for middle school aged youth particularly during after school hours. Groups of idle youth routinely wander through the neighborhoods and display risky behavior including vandalism and theft from unlocked cars. There is a concern that left unaddressed this issue could evolve into gang involvement and other serious crime.

#### **Recommendation:**

- Strengthen community partnerships to provide youth education, life skills training and gang prevention activities targeted to middle school-aged youth.

### **3. Foreclosed Properties/Overcrowding/Home Maintenance**

Residents and HOA representatives have expressed concern about the growing number of foreclosed properties and the impact on property values and HOA assessments. The consistent collection of HOA assessments is required to effectively operate the services of the HOA.

Overcrowding and the resulting increased number of cars per household is a concern. Some parking lots routinely overflow during evenings and weekends.

Some residents expressed concern over increase in number of rental units, along with an increase in negative neighbor interaction. Concerns were raised that there may be a correlation between the negative neighbor interaction and the increase in rentals.

Minor home exterior maintenance issues were observed, including painting, landscaping and fences in disrepair.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Encourage homeownership through acquisition and resale of vacant foreclosed properties.
- Conduct outreach to encourage eligible households to participate in rehab and weatherization programs available through DHCA.
- Establish a funding vehicle under which affordable housing owned under a condominium or homeowners association structure could secure private sector financing to address needed repairs to property.
- Conduct community outreach/education regarding foreclosure prevention, overcrowding issues, home maintenance, landlord/tenant rights and responsibilities, and good neighbor practices.
- Encourage residents to report vacant properties to DHCA. DHCA maintains a list of vacant properties which are monitored by staff regularly.
- Familiarize HOA representatives and residents on utilization of on-line Code Enforcement services including reporting and status check programs.

### **4. Safety and Security**

Residents expressed a desire for an increased police presence and visibility within the neighborhoods. An unmanned police substation is located at the Grand Mart Neighborhood Shopping Center. The substation will close if the rezoning for the shopping center is approved. The final decision on the rezoning has not been determined.

Residents expressed concern about the ability to safely walk throughout the Focus Area particularly along Waring Station and Wisteria Roads due to excessive speeding, inadequate lighting, and faded and/or lack of pedestrian crosswalks. The intersection of Forest Brook and Waring Station and the intersection of Stoney Bottom and Waring Station were named specifically by residents for lack of crosswalks. The lack of shelters and lighting at bus stops are additional issues.

School officials also expressed concern about excessive speeding on major roadways near schools, the need for flashing lights near certain schools, synchronized traffic lights and the need for improved crosswalks.

Untrimmed tree limbs that extend into public roadways and/or hang low enough to impede pedestrian passage on sidewalks, create safety hazards.

**Recommendations:**

- Increase police visibility and presence in neighborhoods.
- Utilize new crime deterrent technologies.
- Repaint existing crosswalks; create new crosswalks at appropriate locations.
- Address lighting issues along public roads and sidewalks.
- Maintain tree trimming program to allow maximum function of existing street lights and to reduce impediments to vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
- Consider traffic calming techniques/devices to reduce vehicular speeds.

**5. Gunner's Lake**

Gunner's Lake is a favored community asset. It functions as a stormwater management facility. The Lake is jointly maintained by the North Lake Village Federation, and the County. The Federation is responsible for aesthetic maintenance of the grounds and trash collection. The County is responsible for structural maintenance and conducts annual inspections of the facility, and monitors the dam during flood emergencies. A preliminary study was completed and indicates that the lake could benefit from a partial dredging. This is a multi-year project with estimated costs between \$400,000 and \$750,000. The County's FY 10 budget includes project design.

Other issues expressed by residents include additional lighting and seating along pathways, and control of over-population of geese. The North Lake Village Federation has reported progress in their work toward solving the issues.

**Recommendations:**

- Complete the design work, required to have dredging of the lake.
- Conduct lighting study along pathways.
- Assess seating issues and issues with geese over-population.

**6. Solid Waste**

Bulk items are at times left at the curb of various intersections. Some residents complain that the dumpsters at the Germantown Square Shopping Center are inadequate and attract rats.

**Recommendations:**

- Establish outreach program to educate residents and encourage the use of County services including the disposal of bulk items and the services of DHCA Code Enforcement.
- Work with the shopping center to address issues with rodents.

## **Conclusion**

Strengthening neighborhoods and supporting communities is an ongoing process that requires group effort and strong partnerships. The DHCA Upcounty team has met with many community stakeholders as well as public and nonprofit entities that have made it clear that willingness exists to work together toward this end. This is a great beginning.

A sincere effort was made to solicit input from all parties. Given the restraints of time and resources however, we recognize that all voices were likely not yet heard. We are committed to continuing our outreach efforts to those with limited English proficiency and others whom we have not yet reached.

Some of these recommendations are inexpensive and others are quite costly. Some have already begun and are part of on-going efforts, others may take years to implement even after funding is identified.

This report does not include a timeframe for implementation; that is our next step. It will be determined not only by financial resources needed and available, but also by the human capital and energy residents bring to this effort. We look forward to a productive partnership.



## **APPENDIX 1: Overview of Selected Neighborhoods**

(See Appendix 2 for locations)

### **Cinnamon Woods (HOA)**

Cinnamon Woods was built in 1970 and is comprised of 684 attached quadraplex housing units. The public areas are maintained by the HOA including parking areas, landscaping, tot lots, streets, community center and pool. The roads appear in good condition. The sidewalks have areas that have been patched and as a result are uneven in areas. The neighborhood is adjacent to Seneca Creek Park and numerous trails connect the neighborhood court yards into parkland.

The street lights are dated and inefficient. They appear to be ordinary incandescent lights. The standard for street lights is high pressure sodium vapor. The Cinnamon Woods Homeowners Association's lighting contractor has completed a lighting study and has determined that 55 new street lights would greatly improve the lighting in the neighborhood.



Typical parking area fixtures

The Cinnamon Woods Homeowners Association began an exterior renovation program in 2007 which involves painting and/or installing vinyl siding on homes. The program was scaled back considerably this year due to a serious decline in assessment payments. Below are photos of homes in the neighborhood without and with, the exterior renovation.



Without Exterior Renovation



With Exterior Renovation

### **Crawford Farms Townhouse Association (HOA)**

Built in the 1980s, there are 62 town homes in the community. The area lacks sidewalks; other infrastructure appears to be adequate and well maintained.

### **Crawford Farms Homeowners Association (HOA)**

Built in the 1980's there are 176 single-family colonial style homes in this neighborhood. The streets, lighting and other infrastructure appears to be adequate and well maintained. Areas of the sidewalk have been patched and could be improved from an esthetic viewpoint. Crawford Farms is accessed via Waring Station Drive, and residents commented that commercial vehicles parked along Waring Station were a nuisance and an eyesore. The new County law passed in July 09 which prohibits this activity has helped alleviate this situation.



### **Fountain Hills Community Association (HOA)**

Built during the late 1990's and early 2000's Fountain Hills is the newest neighborhood in the Focus Area. The neighborhood consists of 222 condominiums, 472 attached town homes and 178 detached single-family homes. The community has a swimming pool, playground, community center and tennis courts. The infrastructure appears adequate and the neighborhood is well maintained.

### **Forest Green Estates (McFarlin South HOA)**

This neighborhood consists of 56 town homes located adjacent to the Germantown Estates neighborhood. These homes were built during the 1980's. There are no sidewalks in the community. Homes exhibited minor maintenance issues. The community streets and lighting appear satisfactory.

### **Germantown Estates (HOA)**

This neighborhood was built around 1979. It consists of 287 single-family homes, 54 of the homes are within the Focus Area. The homes are a mix of various rambler style and colonial style homes with garages or carports. The community does not have a swimming pool or tot lot. The HOA is responsible for trash collection, and maintenance of the common areas which includes landscaping and snow removal. There are no sidewalks. The street lighting appears to be satisfactory.

### **Germantown Station (HOA)**

This is a neighborhood consisting of 49 detached single-family homes built during the 1980's. The home styles are colonial with garages or carports. A few homes appears vacant, however the grounds are being maintained. The neighborhood infrastructure appears satisfactory.



### **The Glen (HOA)**

This is a neighborhood built during the 1980's, consisting of 71 single-family homes. The area appears in satisfactory condition, including the streets and street lights. There are no sidewalks on the side streets.

### **Gunner's View (HOA)**

There are 274 town homes and 84 multi-family units in this community built during the 1980's. The visual assessment indicates several accessibility ramps which do not comply with current American with Disabilities Accessibility standards. Some ramps open into parking spaces. The HOA repairs these instances as required for disabled residents.



### **Landmark Station (HOA)**

This is a community of 41 town homes built during the 1980's within walking distance to the MARC Station. The community infrastructure appears to be satisfactory.

### **Martins Landing (HOA)**

This is a community of 95 town homes built in the 1980s with various styles. Some of the homes back to Gunner's Lake. Minor exterior maintenance issues were observed including older street lights which may be inadequate. Otherwise the area appears satisfactory.

### **Meadows at North Lake Community Association (HOA)**

This is a town home community built during 1985 through 1986. The community consists of 294 town homes divided among 4 sub areas. The sub areas are: Partridge Woods; Willow Spring; Laurel Grove; and Misty Meadows.



The Meadows neighborhoods are well maintained. There appear to be a sufficient number of street lamps. However, some areas appear very dark at night suggesting that some street lamps may require cleaning, repair, or replacement. There are also minor landscaping issues such as overgrown or untrimmed trees on personal property.

### **North Creek Condominiums**

The North Creek community is comprised of 126 townhouse-style condominiums. The organization assumes responsibilities that closely resemble an HOA. These responsibilities include common area maintenance, landscaping trash and snow removal. They also maintain 2 tot lots. The community maintenance is satisfactory. Street entrance ways had gaps in lighting, the association is considering additional a lighting analysis

### **North Lake Village Federation (Umbrella Organization of HOAs)**

The North Lake Village Federation is an umbrella organization which owns and maintains Gunner's Lake, the fishing piers, and the trail surrounding the lake, 2 swimming pools and tennis courts. Fifteen multi-family and single-family community organizations surrounding the lake are members of the Federation. Residents of the member organizations have the option to become members of the Lake Recreation Club which allows them to use the amenities. The Federation has recently completed lighting improvements to the trails, increased seating around the lake, addressed geese overpopulation and is an advocate for the dredging of the lake.

The member organizations of the Federation are: Avalon Knolls Community, Crawford Farm Townhouse Association, Crawford Farms HOA, Glen HOA, Knolls at North Lake, Martins Landing HOA, Meadows at North Lake, North Lake Apartments, Overlook at North Lake, Shores at North Lake, Waters Edge Apartments, Woodlake HOA, Rolling Hills Apartments, and Waring Station HOA, and Woods at North Lake,

### **North Lake Woods (HOA)**

This neighborhood consists of 310 townhouses built in the 1980's. Residents commented on insufficient parking on evenings and weekends. Upon visual assessment the lack of ADA compliant ramps was noted. A few properties lack landscaping. An unpaved trail leads into the park.



### **Olde Seneca Woods (HOA)**

This neighborhood built in the 1980's is comprised of 231 town homes. Minor maintenance issues were observed including landscaping. It was also apparent that a number of the homes were vacant; sale signs or notices were posted. Street lights, side walks and street lights are adequate.

### **Overlook at North Lake (HOA)**

Built around 1988 this community is comprised of 255 town homes in two different exterior styles, one style includes a garage. Infrastructure appears adequately maintained. Residents have expressed concerns about lighting along Forest Brooke Road and incidents of crime. Inappropriately disposed solid waste was observed frequently in the neighborhood.

### **Seneca Forest (HOA)**

There are 425 town homes in this neighborhood which were built in the 1980's. The distinct design of the homes is noteworthy. Improved landscaping and updating of architectural features which was displayed on some of the homes create a striking improvement. Several lawns lacking landscaping and vacant properties were noted.



Minimal landscaping



Improved landscaping & architectural elements

### **Shores at North Lake (HOA)**

This neighborhood which is adjacent to Gunners Lake consists of 243 townhouses built in the 1980's. Streets, lighting, sidewalks and homes appear well maintained. No issue areas were noted upon visual assessment.

### **Stoneridge (HOA)**

The Stoneridge community was built in the 1970's and includes 298 town homes. The streets, sidewalks and housing units are well maintained. The housing units appear to be T-1-11 (wood) siding which is a material which requires a regular schedule of painting. This does not seem to be a problem in this community. The HOA recently completed a landscaping project to deter crime and has added 10-12 new lights over the past three years. The HOA's responsibilities include landscaping, snow removal, trash collection and maintenance of the pool and lights.



### **Waring Station (HOA)**

This is a neighborhood of 174 town homes built in the 1980's. There are various styles of town homes in the neighborhood, including some with garages. The homes are frame, minor maintenance including painting and shutter repair was observed. Illegal dumping was observed on multiple occasions at the corner of Forest Brook and Waring Station Road.



Illegal dumping in neighborhood.

### **Woodlake (HOA)**

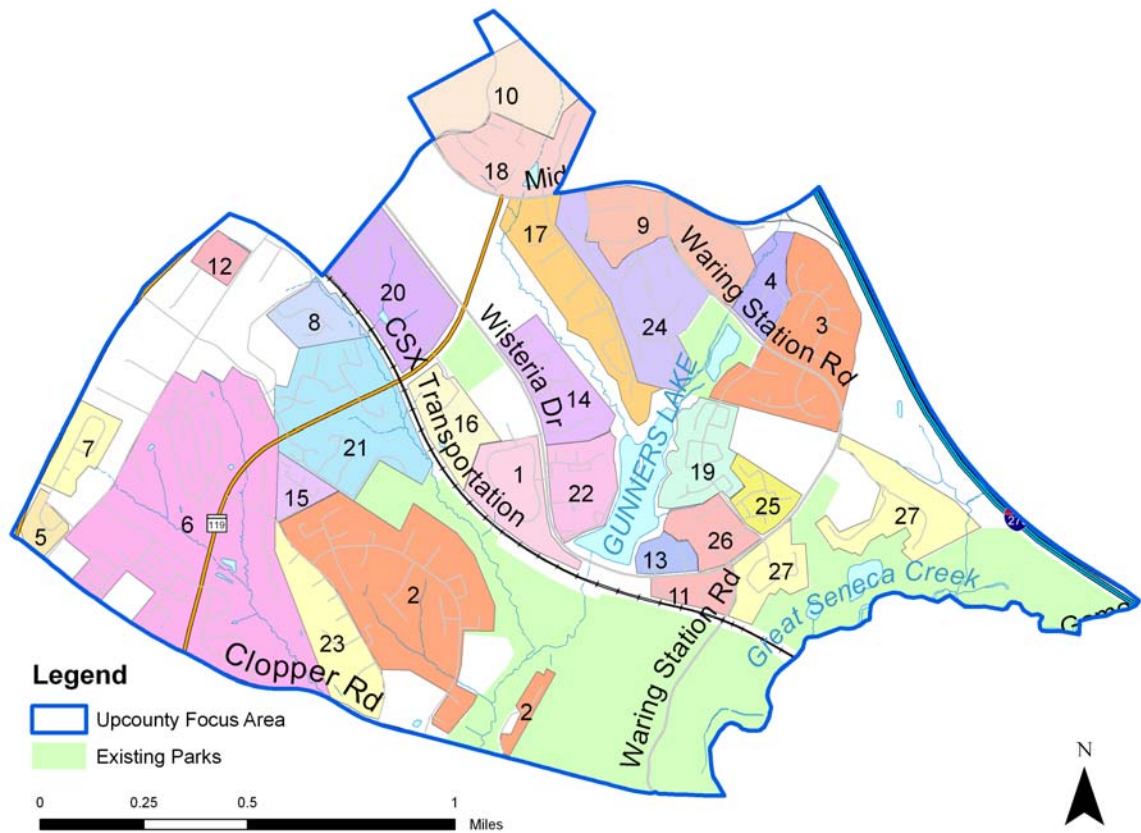
This is a neighborhood consisting of 358 town homes built in the 1980s. The neighborhood appears well maintained. Pathways run between and behind homes into parkland areas, these paths are rustic, and unlit. Some minor exterior maintenance issues were observed on homes such as chipping paint and loose gutters. A few homes appeared to be vacant, based upon the lack of window coverings and empty interiors, however overgrown grass, major disrepair or other detrimental signs of vacancy were not observed.



Dirt path to parkland



## APPENDIX 2: Map of Upcounty Focus Area Neighborhoods and Apartment Communities



Map Number	Community Name	Map Number	Community Name
1	Avalon Knolls Apartments	15	North Creek Condo
2	Cinnamon Woods	16	North Lake Apartments
2	Cinnamon Woods	17	North Lake Woods
3	Crawford Farms	18	Olde Seneca Woods
4	Crawford Farms Townhouses	19	Overlook at North Lake
5	Forest Green Estates	20	Rolling Hills Apartments
6	Fountain Hills	21	Seneca Forest
7	Germantown Estates	22	Shores at North Lake
8	Germantown Station	23	Stoneridge
9	Gunner's View	24	The Glen
10	Hamptons at Town Center	25	Waring Station
11	Knolls at North Lake	26	Water's Edge
12	Landmark Station	27	Woodlake
13	Martin's Landing	27	Woodlake
14	Meadows at North Lake		

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## APPENDIX 3: 2005 Census Update Survey

### 2005 Census Update Survey

		Upcounty Focus Area	Germantown Planning Area	Countywide
P O P U L A T I O N	<b>Household Population</b>	22,060	79,580	931,000
	<b>% Female</b>	51.8%	52.2%	52.9%
	<b>Age Distribution:</b>			
	% 0-4 Years Old	10.1%	8.5%	6.8%
	% 5-17 Years Old	19.6%	20.4%	19.1%
	% 18-29 Years Old	16.0%	14.3%	12.3%
	% 30-44 Years Old	28.4%	29.1%	23.1%
	% 45-64 Years Old	21.2%	23.4%	27.5%
	% 65-74 Years Old	2.9%	2.7%	5.8%
	% Over 74 Years Old	1.8%	1.5%	5.4%
	<b>Average Age (years)</b>	31.4	32.0	36.9
	<b>Race:</b>			
	% White	51.4%	55.3%	64.0%
	% Black	24.8%	20.7%	16.6%
	% Asian or Pacific Islander	14.5%	18.2%	13.4%
	% Other	9.4%	5.8%	6.0%
	<b>Hispanic or Latino and Race<sup>1</sup></b>			
	% Hispanic or Latino <sup>1</sup>	26.8%	15.4%	13.9%
	% Not Hispanic White	33.7%	45.3%	55.7%
	<b>Language Spoken at Home</b>			
L A B O R  F O R C E	Persons 5 Years and Older	19,830	72,800	868,000
	% Speak Language Other than English	44.4%	40.3%	35.3%
	% Speak English less than "Very Well"	15.9%	12.4%	9.7%
	<b>Educational Attainment:</b>			
	Persons 25 Years and Older	13,985	50,790	624,025
	% Less than High School Diploma	9.4%	6.1%	7.8%
	% High School Graduate	30.4%	29.6%	22.3%
	% Associate or Trade School	9.4%	8.6%	6.3%
	% Bachelor's Degree	30.5%	29.9%	28.6%
	% Grad, Professional or Doctoral	20.3%	25.8%	35.0%
	<b>Number of Employed Residents<sup>2</sup></b>	12,850	47,740	526,830
	<b>% Females Who Are Employed<sup>2</sup></b>	75.4%	75.3%	68.2%
	<b>Women with Children Under Age 6</b>	2,165	7,000	67,840
	% Employed <sup>2</sup>	62.7%	61.5%	68.5%
	<b>Work Location:</b>			
	% Montgomery County	70.8%	72.9%	59.9%
	% Prince George's County	3.5%	3.2%	5.1%
	% Elsewhere in Maryland	4.6%	4.4%	4.8%
	% Washington, D.C.	13.8%	11.8%	21.5%
	% Virginia	6.2%	7.1%	7.5%
	% Outside MD-VA-DC	1.0%	0.7%	1.1%
	<b>Work Trip:</b>			
	% Driving	85.8%	83.7%	77.4%
	% Alone	74.4%	75.3%	72.0%
	% Carpool	11.4%	8.4%	5.3%
	% Public Transit or Rail	11.4%	12.3%	15.5%
	% Walk/Bicycle/Other	1.1%	1.3%	2.8%
	% Work at Home	1.8%	2.8%	4.4%
	<b>Average Commuting Time to Work (minutes)</b>			
	Overall	33.7	32.9	31.0
	By Car	30.0	29.5	29.4
	By Public Transit	64.6	58.4	48.5

\* Insufficient data for reliable estimates.

<sup>1</sup> Those of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

<sup>2</sup> Ages 16 and older and employed full- or part-time.

Source: 2005 Census Update Survey; Research & Technology Center,  
Montgomery County Planning Dept., M-NCPPC February 2009 v2

## 2005 Census Update Survey (continued)

		Upcounty Focus Area	Germantown Planning Area	Countywide
H O U S I N G	<b>Households by Structure Type</b>	8,085	29,045	350,000
	<b>% Total Households by Structure Type</b>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	<b>Average Household Size</b>	2.73	2.74	2.66
	<b>Tenure:</b>			
	% Rental	24.7%	20.4%	25.7%
	<b>Average Monthly Costs:</b>			
	Homeowner	\$1,359	\$1,507	\$1,687
	Renter	\$949	\$1,034	\$1,167
	<b>Residence in April 2000:</b>			
	% in Same Home	42.0%	46.2%	57.8%
	% Elsewhere in County	33.5%	31.9%	21.8%
	% Elsewhere in Maryland	4.1%	5.3%	4.5%
	% D.C or Northern Virginia	2.4%	2.9%	4.0%
	% Outside Metro Area	17.9%	13.8%	12.0%
	<b>Median Years in Same Home</b>	4	4	6
	<b>Average Age of Household Head</b>	43.0	44.3	50.6
	<b>% Households with Foreign Born Head or Spouse</b>	41.0%	37.7%	34.8%
	<b>% Households Speaking Spanish</b>	21.8%	14.7%	12.5%
	<b>Households by Type:</b>			
	% Family Households	72.8%	75.8%	74.2%
	% Married-Couple	56.1%	60.8%	61.8%
	% Single-Parent	12.9%	12.2%	10.2%
	% Nonfamily Households	27.2%	24.2%	25.6%
	% Householder Living Alone	25.6%	22.3%	23.5%
	<b>Persons in Households:</b>			
	% 1 Person	25.6%	22.3%	23.5%
	% 2 Persons	28.6%	28.5%	30.8%
	% 3 Persons	13.9%	18.0%	17.5%
	% 4 Persons	16.0%	18.6%	17.1%
	% 5+ Persons	15.9%	12.6%	11.0%
	<b>Average Number of Cars</b>	1.8	1.9	1.9
	<b>% of Households with Computers</b>	91.5%	92.9%	89.0%
	% of these visiting M-NCPPC website	24.9%	29.8%	28.9%
I N C O M E	<b>2004 Household Income Distribution:</b>			
	% Under \$15,000	2.8%	3.8%	4.2%
	% \$15,000 to \$29,999	10.5%	6.2%	7.3%
	% \$30,000 to \$49,999	18.8%	16.0%	14.5%
	% \$50,000 to \$69,999	24.7%	18.9%	15.0%
	% \$70,000 to \$99,999	24.3%	23.8%	18.6%
	% \$100,000 to 149,999	15.2%	22.1%	20.9%
	% \$150,000 to 199,999	3.5%	7.0%	8.8%
	% \$200,000+	0.3%	2.2%	10.7%
	<b>2004 Median Household Income</b>	\$63,400	\$76,655	\$83,880
	<b>% of Households Spending More Than 30% of Income on Housing Costs:</b>			
	% Homeowners	25.4%	19.0%	16.9%
	% Renters	39.9%	38.9%	40.7%

\* Insufficient data for reliable estimates.



## APPENDIX 4: Neighborhood Visual Attractiveness Survey and Summary

### Ranked Scoring by Questions

April 2009

This assessment was conducted in the field using the following scoring system for each statement in each neighborhood:

5 = Strongly Agree	2 = Disagree
4 = Agree	1 = Strongly Disagree
3 = Neither Agree or Disagree	0 = Not Applicable

Average Score	Rank	Statement
3.00	1	6. Businesses and storefront facades in the neighborhood generally are in satisfactory condition.
3.25	2	10. Street lighting in the neighborhood is sufficient to illuminate pedestrian pathways and access to homes
3.43	3	14. There are no abandoned buildings in the neighborhood.
3.52	4	2. There are no houses or apartment buildings that are vacant
3.75	5	11. Street signs easily allow people to identify where they are.
3.79	6	5. Parks and playgrounds are appealing
3.83	7	12. Neighborhood identification signs help reinforce the identity of the area.
3.95	8	7. The sidewalks in the neighborhood handle pedestrian activity adequately.
3.95	9	19. Overall visual attractiveness of the neighborhood is satisfactory or better.
3.95	10	4. The maintenance of front and side yards including fences walkways and driveways appear satisfactory
4.00	11	9. Parking in the neighborhood is satisfactory to meet the needs of residents and their visitors.
4.10	12	13. Cleanliness of the neighborhood is generally satisfactory.
4.14	13	1. The overall condition of the exterior of the houses/apt (structure, roof, windows, doors, porches, steps appears satisfactory
4.19	14	18. There is no graffiti in the neighborhood.
4.20	15	8. Street surfaces in the neighborhood generally are in good repair.
4.24	16	15. There are no vacant, unkempt lots in the neighborhood.
4.29	17	3. There are no houses or apartments that are in need of major repairs
4.33	18	16. There are no abandoned cars in the neighborhood.
4.33	19	17. There is no evidence of illegal dumping in the area.

Average scores for each neighborhood (not including Question 6) range from 2.89 to 4.82

## Detailed Scoring

April 2009

### Questions

Community or HOA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Martin's Landing	4	5	5	4	NA	NA	5	5	5	4
Shores at North Lake	5	5	5	5	5	NA	5	4	4	4
Crawford Farms (all)	5	5	5	5	4	NA	3	5	5	3
Woodlake	4	5	3	5	5	NA	4	4	4	4
Gunner's View	4	4	5	4	4	NA	4	5	5	4
Fountain Hills	5	4	4	4	5	NA	4	4	4	4
Meadows - Laurel Grove	5	5	5	3	4	NA	4	4	4	4
Germantown Estates	5	4	4	4	4	NA	4	4	4	4
North Creek Condos	4	2	4	4	2	NA	4	4	3	4
Waring Station	4	4	4	4	3	NA	4	4	4	4
Seneca Forest	4	2	4	4	5	NA	4	4	4	4
The Glen	4	3	5	4	4	3	3	4	4	4
Gunner's View (multi-family)	4	3	5	5	NA	3	4	5	5	2
Olde Seneca Woods - East	4	4	4	4	4	NA	4	4	4	2
Meadows - Misty Meadow	4	3	5	4	3	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Meadows - Patridge	4	3	4	4	3	NA	4	4	4	2
Northlake Woods - Walnut Cove	4	4	5	4	3	NA	5	5	4	2
Meadows - Willow Spring	4	2	4	4	4	NA	4	4	3	2
Olde Seneca Woods - West	4	2	3	2	4	NA	4	4	4	3
The Woods at Northcreek	4	2	4	3	4	NA	4	4	3	1
Cinnamon Woods	2	3	3	3	2	NA	NA	4	4	4
Average Score:	4.14	3.52	4.29	3.95	3.43		4.05	4.25	4.05	3.25

### Questions:

1. The overall condition of the exterior of the houses/apt appears satisfactory
2. There are no houses or apartment buildings that are vacant
3. There are no houses or apartments that are in need of major repairs
4. The maintenance of front and side yards - fences, walkways, and driveways appear satisfactory
5. Parks and playgrounds are appealing
6. Businesses and storefront facades in the neighborhood generally are in satisfactory condition.
7. The sidewalks in the neighborhood handle pedestrian activity adequately.
8. Street surfaces in the neighborhood generally are in good repair.
9. Parking in the neighborhood is satisfactory to meet the needs of residents and their visitors.
10. Street lighting in neighborhood is sufficient to illuminate pedestrian pathways / access to homes

Detailed Scoring  
April 2009

Questions

Community or HOA	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	Score	Rank
Martin's Landing	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4.82	1
Shores at North Lake	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4.60	2
Crawford Farms (all)	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	4.50	3
Woodlake	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	4.30	4
Gunner's View	4	NA	4	2	5	5	5	5	4	4.30	5
Fountain Hills	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	4.20	6
Meadows - Laurel Grove	3	3	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4.10	7
Germantown Estates	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4.10	8
North Creek Condos	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4.00	9
Waring Station	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	3.90	10
Seneca Forest	4	4	4	2	4	4	5	4	4	3.90	11
The Glen	4	1	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	3.90	12
Gunner's View (multi-family)	2	3	4	3	5	5	4	4	3	3.89	13
Olde Seneca Woods - East	4	4	4	2	4	3	4	4	4	3.80	14
Meadows - Misty Meadow	NA	NA	NA	3	4	4	4	4	NA	3.80	15
Meadows - Patridge	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	3.60	16
Northlake Woods - Walnut Cove	4	4	4	4	2	4	3	4	2	3.50	17
Meadows - Willow Spring	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	4	4	3.50	18
Olde Seneca Woods - West	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3.40	19
The Woods at Northcreek	3	4	4	2	4	4	4	4	4	3.20	20
Cinnamon Woods	1	4	4	4	3	4	4	2	2	2.89	21
Average Score:	3.75	3.83	4.10	3.43	4.24	4.33	4.33	4.19	3.95		

Questions:

11. Street signs easily allow people to identify where they are.
12. Neighborhood identification signs help reinforce the identity of the area.
13. Cleanliness of the neighborhood is generally satisfactory.
14. There are no abandoned buildings in the neighborhood.
15. There are no vacant, unkempt lots in the neighborhood.
16. There are no abandoned cars in the neighborhood.
17. There is no evidence of illegal dumping in the area.
18. There is no graffiti in the neighborhood.
19. Overall visual attractiveness of the neighborhood is satisfactory or better.

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## APPENDIX 5: Focus Area/Countywide Foreclosure Event Comparison

### Mid-County Foreclosure Events

Year & Quarter	Foreclosure Event Type			Total	Percent of County	Quarterly Increase
	Default	Auction	Real-estate Owned			
2008 Q1	16	25	4	45	2.7%	
2008 Q2	36	2	1	39	3.0%	-13.3%
2008 Q3	8	2	12	22	2.4%	-43.6%
2008 Q4	24	10	10	44	2.3%	100.0%
2009 Q1	30	18	7	55	2.8%	25.0%
Total	114	57	34	205	2.8%	

### Upcounty Foreclosure Events

Year & Quarter	Foreclosure Event Type			Total	Percent of County	Quarterly Increase
	Default	Auction	Real-estate Owned			
2008 Q1	35	46	6	87	5.3%	
2008 Q2	64	7	3	74	5.6%	-14.9%
2008 Q3	25	6	13	44	4.7%	-40.5%
2008 Q4	48	25	16	89	5.6%	102.3%
2009 Q1	53	44	16	113	5.8%	27.0%
Total	225	128	54	407	5.5%	

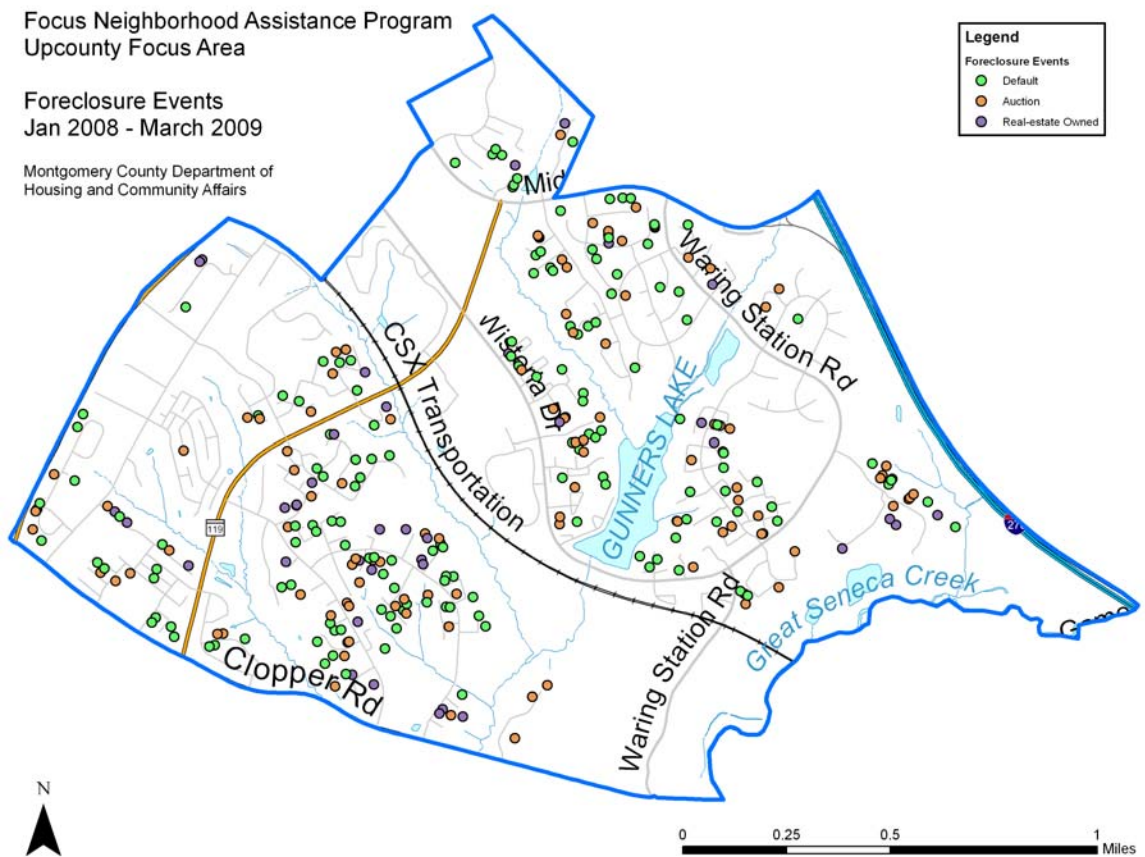
### Countywide Foreclosure Events

Year & Quarter	Foreclosure Event Type			Total	Quarterly Increase
	Default	Auction	Real-estate Owned		
2008 Q1	918	613	117	1,648	
2008 Q2	78	1,163	76	1,317	-20.1%
2008 Q3	111	504	315	930	-29.4%
2008 Q4	368	883	330	1,581	70.0%
2009 Q1	1,117	593	235	1,945	23.0%
Total	2,592	3,756	1,073	7,421	

Sources: RealtyTrac & the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development; Montgomery County Department of Planning

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## APPENDIX 6: Map of Foreclosure Events



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## **APPENDIX 7: Common Ownership Communities**

Since 1964, homeowners associations have become increasingly common in the USA. In the 1970s, a growing scarcity of land for suburban development resulted in escalating land costs, prompting developers to increase the density of homes on the land. Homes are clustered around common green open areas to retain a suburban atmosphere. These common areas are managed by associations.

Another primary driver in the proliferation of single-family homeowners associations was the U.S. Clean Water Act of 1977, which required all new real estate developments to detain storm water so that flow to adjoining properties was no greater than the pre-development runoff. This law required nearly all residential developments to construct detention or retention areas to hold excess storm water until it could be released at the pre-development flow level. Since these detention areas serve multiple residences they are almost always designated as common area, which results in the need for a homeowners association.

State and County statutes provide the bases for establishing common ownership communities, which are also often referred to as community associations, planned residential developments, and/or common interest developments.

The management and governance of common ownership communities are outlined in the association's governing documents. The Declaration, sometimes called the Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CCRs), imposes architectural guidelines and use limitations on the exterior of the privately owned properties or residential units within the association. These controls are intended to provide uniform standards for the community and some protection of the property values. State laws and the governing documents jointly empower the association to adopt and enforce rules and regulations as the association deems pertinent to resolve problems and govern the everyday routines and activities within the community. This combination of laws, governing documents, and adopted policies and regulations makes each and every association a distinctly separate and unique entity.

The primary difference between a homeowners association and a condominium association is in the ownership of the common grounds and the common elements. In a homeowners association, the common grounds and facilities (if any) are owned in fee simple by the association as an entity; all members have a right to use and an obligation to fund the maintenance of the common grounds and common elements. In a condominium, each individual unit owner also owns an undivided interest in all common grounds, streets and parking, recreation facilities, utilities, and parts of the residential structure (*i.e.*, the roof and lobby), which are collectively known as the "common elements." The condominium association, sometimes referred to as the Council of Unit Owners, typically, owns no part of the common elements.

In both types of property ownership, however, the association is legally responsible to maintain, repair, replace, and manage the common grounds/elements, and has the authority to adopt and enforce rules and regulations for the members' use of the common grounds/elements. These differences are substantial enough to require separate statutes in the Annotated Code of Maryland. In certain cases, the Montgomery County Code provides further statutory authority to enforce association covenants, bylaws, rules and regulations, and/or to become involved in an association's business, membership, or other internal matters. Beyond these State and County laws, the association's self-

governance takes place through its internal due-process procedure, alternative dispute resolution methods, or civil actions in court, which may be initiated either by the association or by a member. Association membership, rights, and obligations are mandatory and automatic with the purchase of a property or residential unit subject to its governing documents. This mandate for association membership runs with the land, and automatically transfers to each new owner every time the property or unit is sold.

This mandatory membership cannot be waived or voided by an owner, and is enforceable by law. This also assures each member's right to use the common facilities and grounds, and imposes upon each member an obligation to share in the common expense and responsibilities of governance. The association has the lawful authority to annually assess and collect fees for maintenance of the community and operation of the association; to enforce the covenants, conditions, and restrictions; and, if necessary and provided for in the governing documents, to levy monetary penalties or assessments for violations thereof.

Extracted in part from "Montgomery County, Common Ownership Manual & Resource guide, 2005. The full text is available at:

[http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/ocp/ccoc/pdf/final\\_draft\\_manual\\_9\\_09\\_05.pdf](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/ocp/ccoc/pdf/final_draft_manual_9_09_05.pdf)



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